

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



March 18, 2002

TO: REFUGEE COORDINATORS

This letter is to request that counties and providers receiving Targeted Assistance - Discretionary grant funding (TARL) for elderly refugee services take the specific actions which are listed below. These are actions considered key to influencing which services are offered by your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). They are:

1. Obtain a copy of your local AAA's most current four-year plan and two-year updates to address the needs of their service area.
2. Review the plans for services needed by your senior refugee clientele as well as for activities that would encourage and facilitate their participation in these services.
3. Find out when their Advisory Council meets and arrange to participate in these meetings regularly. If there are openings for new members, find out how you can become a member. Advisory Councils assist with the development of the four-year plan, including developing goals and objectives for targeting service systems to special populations within the service area.
4. Prepare input on the numbers and needs of elderly refugees in your area and present that information at a Council meeting. Your input is particularly important when the Council is obtaining formal community input for the four-year plan and updates. Many of the AAAs may already have those dates selected. If yours does not, keep in touch with your contact for those dates. Convey your ideas on how your organization can collaborate with the AAA to address some of the barriers that keep elderly refugees from becoming part of the elderly network. Some ideas include providing translators at events sponsored by the AAA or translating and distributing informational AAA materials to refugee seniors.
5. See if your AAA publishes a newsletter or maintains a website and stay informed of elderly issues and activities. Offer to write an article about elderly refugee services or a newsletter or their website.
6. Invite the AAA to provide resource information at a Refugee Awareness month (May) event.

Refugee Coordinators are requested to forward a copy of this letter as well as to discuss its contents with their elderly services providers. In addition, we ask you to include actions that you and/or your providers have taken with regard to these suggested activities in the next semiannual report on this grant due April 20, 2002. These reports give us information as to what is working well and new program ideas that acknowledge your efforts and from which others may gain insight.

We hope these actions will stimulate closer collaboration between local agencies on aging and refugee services so that access to senior services by refugees will be improved and attention to the delivery of culturally competent services will be enhanced.

General questions on this letter can be directed to your Refugee Programs Branch Consultant. For more specific questions or feedback, please call Ophelia Farrell at (916) 653-8980, the staff person serving as liaison between the Refugee Programs Branch and the California Department of Aging.

Sincerely,

***Original signed by
Thuan Nguyen 3/18/02***

THUAN NGUYEN, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch

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